

Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2642

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1892

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MPOL CH

SUBJECT: TENG HSIAO-PING COMMENTS ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY

REF: PEKING 1738, PEKING 1798

1. ALTHOUGH THE MAIN LINES OF THE DEBATE ARE BY NO MEANS CLEAR, IT HAS SEEMED TO US THAT ONE ASPECT OF THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO DENIGRATE LIN PIAO'S MILITARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS VERY LIKELY INVOLVES A CONTINUING MAJOR DEBATE OVER MILITARY POLICY AND PRIORITIES. ONE IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE CONTROVERSY MAY WELL BE THE RELATIVE ROLE OF CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN CHINESE STRATEGY. SOME RAMBLING COMMENTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS BY VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING TO VISITING WEST GERMAN PARLIAMENTARIANS SUGGEST THAT THIS PROBLEM IS VERY MUCH ON THE MINDS OF THE PRC LEADERSHIP.

2. ACCORDING TO WEST GERMAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS, TENG
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MENTIONED A VISIT BY THE PARLIAMENTARIANS TO AN UNDER-

GROUND SHELTER, AND THEN COMMENTED THAT THE SHELTERS WERE MEANT FOR DEFENSE AGAINST A CONVENTIONAL RATHER THAN NUCLEAR ATTACK. HE CONTINUED WITH A LENGTHY DIGRESSION EMPHASIZING THAT CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY WAS QUITE IMPORTANT AND DERIDED THOSE PEOPLE WHO SAID WESTERN EUROPE DID NOT NEED CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS BECAUSE ANY WAR BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE FOUGHT WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS. ON THE CONTRARY, SAID TENG, THE CHINESE BELIEVE THAT A WAR BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION MAY WELL BE FOUGHT WITH CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. GERMAN EMBOFFS WHO WERE PRESENT FELT TENG DWELT ON SUBJECT OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY FAR LONGER THAN THE USUAL PEP TALK TO THEIR GERMANS TO KEEP UP THEIR DEFENSES AGAINST THE SOVIETS AND FELT THAT TENG WAS DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT RATHER THAN PUSHING A PROPAGANDA LINE.
BUSH

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Message Attributes

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